

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for increasing channel utilization in a video broadcast system, comprising:

receiving, at a head-end, a request for a video program from one of a plurality of subscriber stations;

determining, at said head-end, whether said requested video program is associated with one of a predetermined plurality of subsets of video channels, wherein said plurality of subsets of video channels comprises a first subset of video channels representing a first subset of video broadcast channels having a first subscriber viewership level greater than a threshold level, a second subset of video channels representing a second subset of video broadcast channels having a second subscriber viewership level less than said threshold level, and a third subset of video channels representing on-demand channels having a third subscriber viewership associated with video-on-demand;

causing substantially continuous transmission of said first subset of video broadcast channels from said head-end ~~toward~~to said plurality of subscriber stations;

causing transmission of said second subset of video broadcast channels from said head-end to said plurality of subscriber stations based upon availability of channels in said second subset of channels and assigning video programming corresponding ~~toward~~to said request to an available one of said second subset of channels; and

causing transmission of said third subset of video channels from said head-end ~~toward~~to said plurality of subscriber stations upon assigning video programming corresponding to said request to an available one of said third subset of channels.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

collecting information from each of the corresponding subscriber stations regarding the frequency of channel usage and favorite channel selections.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

sending said collected information from said corresponding subscriber stations to a broadcast interconnect manager for managing broadcast channels and the narrowcast channels within a broadcast spectrum.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, further comprising:

updating said plurality of subscriber stations with broadcast channel availability in a form of a channel map.

5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein said updating said plurality of subscriber stations with broadcast channel availability comprises:

associating program identity, channel frequency, program availability, and analog/digital format for each broadcast channel.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein at each subscriber station, said method further comprises:

determining whether said requested channel is in said channel map;

if ~~so~~ said requested channel is in said channel map, tuning to said requested channel;

if said requested channel is not in said channel map, adding said requested channel to said channel map in an instance where said requested channel is available from said head-end and tuning to said channel; and

providing indicia that said requested channel is unavailable for viewing in an instance where said requested channel ~~is~~ is unavailable.

7. (original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:

sending a channel map modifier request to said subscriber station;

adding a new channel to said channel map at said subscriber station in an instance said channel map modifier request comprises an add channel request.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

determining channel use of a channel listed in said channel map modifier request in an instance said channel map modifier request comprises a delete channel request;

sending a channel in use response to said head-end in an instance a channel associated with said delete channel request is in use; and

otherwise, deleting said channel associated with said delete channel request.

9. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting said requested video program from said head-end to subscriber equipment associated with said request, via a transmission network characterized by a broadcast spectrum over which programs are transmitted to said plurality of subscriber stations.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~4~~9, wherein said broadcast spectrum comprises a semi-static broadcast portion of n channels, an on-demand broadcast portion of m channels, and a narrow-cast portion of p channels, where m, n, and p are integers greater than one, said method further comprising:

allocating a plurality of channel slots for each of said portions of channels.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said first subset of broadcast channels comprises high viewership of channels associated with said first subset, said second subset of broadcast channels comprises lower viewership of channels associated with said second subset, said method further comprising:

~~dynamically~~ changing, at said head-end, broadcast channel association with said first and second subsets of broadcast channels in response to changes in subscriber viewership.

12. (new) An apparatus comprising:

a processor;

memory storing instructions that, when executed by the processor, cause the apparatus to perform:

receiving a request for a video program from one of a plurality of subscriber stations;

determining whether said requested video program is associated with one of a predetermined plurality of subsets of video channels, wherein said plurality of subsets of video channels comprises a first subset of video channels representing a first subset of video broadcast channels having a first subscriber viewership level greater than a threshold level, a second subset of video channels representing a second subset of video broadcast channels having a second subscriber viewership level less than said threshold level, and a third subset of video channels representing on-demand channels having a third subscriber viewership associated with video-on-demand;

substantially continuously transmitting said first subset of video broadcast channels to said plurality of subscriber stations;

transmitting said second subset of video broadcast channels to said plurality of subscriber stations based upon availability of channels in said second subset of channels and assigning video programming corresponding to said request to an available one of said second subset of channels; and

transmitting said third subset of video channels to said plurality of subscriber stations upon assigning video programming corresponding to said request to an available one of said third subset of channels.

13. (new) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the instructions include at least one instruction that, when executed by the processor, causes the apparatus to perform:

collecting information from each of the corresponding subscriber stations regarding the frequency of channel usage and favorite channel selections.